

FINAC

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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date entered _____

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Ahavas Shalom Reform Temple
and/or common Trinity Assembly of God Church

2. Location

street & number 503 South Main Street N/A not for publication
city, town Ligonier N/A vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~
state Indiana code 018 county Noble code 113

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Trustees of Trinity Assembly of God Church
street & number 503 South Main Street
city, town Ligonier N/A vicinity of state Indiana 46767

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Noble County Recorder's Office
street & number Noble County Courthouse
city, town Albion state Indiana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date _____ federal state county local
depository for survey records N/A
city, town _____ state _____

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The former Ahavas Shalom Reform Temple is located in the midst of a residential area in the south-central part of Ligonier, Indiana. The neighborhood of which the former temple is a part extends along either side of Main Street, one block West of the downtown. In the 19th century this neighborhood was known as "New Jerusalem" because it was home to the most prominent members of the large local Jewish community. The former temple stands on the east side of the street, in the middle of a block (Photo 1).

The building is a one story red brick mass whose Greek cross plan is topped by a steep cross-gabled roof. The entrance is located in the base of the tower which fills the space between the arms of the plan on the southwest corner (Photos 2, 3). The tower walls stand as tall as the tops of the adjacent gables, and the tower walls are crowned by closely grouped machicolations of corbelled brick. Along the base of the tower's steep pyramidal roof on each of its sides is a low gable whose tympanum is enriched with a sunburst design in low relief; midway up each rake of the tower roof the gable motif is repeated as a more steeply-pitched gabled dormer, decorated with an oculus set in a paneled surround. The total effect of the tower's features in outline is reminiscent of that of a Victorian Gothic broached spire. The walls of the tower and of the remainder of the west (main) elevation are faced with pressed brick which is slightly darker in color than the common soft-pressed brick used on the rest of the exterior.

The smooth masonry planes are broken by a single large window on the north, west, and south gables, and by the main entrance in the base of the tower, as well as a smaller door on the return wall at the north end of the west elevation. This pattern of regular openings is emphasized by a stringcourse of rock-faced ashlar which girds the building at the common springline which is used for the drop arches of these openings. The voussoirs of all of the arches, except that of the minor entrance, are smoothly finished to emphasize their use as spanning elements, and they are capped by a convex archivolt molding whose ends return upon themselves as volutes at the springlines of the arches. On the west elevation the walls also have a water course of smooth ashlar limestone above the random granite rubble which is used for the facing of the entire foundation. The walls of the entire exterior are crowned by a galvanized iron cove cornice whose cove is punctuated by regularly spaced plain rosettes. The cornice returns at the bases of the gables, and extends up to their rakes beneath the original slate roof.

The interior of the temple consists of a vestibule in the base of the tower and a single large sanctuary space inside the main mass (Photos 4, 5). The ceiling of the sanctuary follows the shape of the roofline but is truncated in a jerkin-head fashion by a flat, cross-shaped ceiling whose arms are equal in width to the width of the large gable windows. The areas of the windows are subdivided by a horizontal mullion at the springline, and the lower halves of the windows are divided by vertical mullions into wide central panels of fixed glass flanked by narrower double-hung windows. The arched tympanum lights above are subdivided by mullions into a large, round central light flanked on either side by smaller round lights; more slender pairs of vertical and horizontal mullions subdivide the large circular lights to form a square panel at their centers. The motif of inscribed circles which is used in the glazing of these panels is continued in the round-arched design of the lower flanking panels and the patterns of inscribed circles seen in the tympanum panels over the entrances. Presumably, this pattern was also continued in the design of the wall stencilling, which has since been painted out.

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Although dominated by these windows, the sanctuary is further articulated as a series of smaller areas by changes in the floor levels. The main seating area has a sloping floor which extends the width of the plan arms from north to south; at the top of the slope is a seating area in the west arm of the plan, and at the base of the slope is the raised platform of the dais. Centered on the east wall behind the dais is the oran kodosh, or niche, which is an aedicula enframed by fluted pilasters beneath a low pediment. Both the capitals of the pilasters and the architrave above them are enriched by carvings in low relief of sunburst rosettes flanked by acanthus leaves. The interior of the niche has a series of shallow drawers beneath the void in which were kept the temple's Torah scrolls (Photo 6). Originally, the temple's ner tomid, a lantern symbolic of the eternal light of Judaism, hung from the ceiling in front of the oran kodosh; the fixture original to this sanctuary now hangs in the Lakeside Congregation for Reform Judaism in Highland Park, Illinois. Although this symbolic light has disappeared, the room does still have several original lighting fixtures, the most important of which is the original gas chandelier which hangs from the center of the sanctuary ceiling and features sixteen conical shades of pearly white opalescent glass mounted on a frame of brass filigree. A smaller, three-branch gasolier with white morning glory shades hangs over the seating platform in the rear of the sanctuary, and wall brackets with the same style shades flank the north and south windows.

The interior also has its original oak woodwork, though all of it has been painted over the original golden oak finish. This includes a wainscote of beaded car siding which extends around the entire interior up to the line of the window sills, as well as the window and door casing, which is a center cove molding. The casing is punctuated by shoe and head blocks which have bullseye turnings on their faces and beveled edges. The head blocks are used to flank the openings at the springline, and similar keystone-shaped blocks are used at the apexes of the large gable windows. The three panel design used for all of the doors features panels of vertical beaded car siding and Victorian Gothic style cast iron latch plates and crocket-topped hinges (Photo 7).

Apart from the painting out of the original finishes of the walls and woodwork, the only major change to the interior has been the replacement of the original oak pews with modern wood pews, which was done sometime in the last decade. The ceiling has been subject to some water damage caused by ice damming in the narrow valleys behind the tower, and similar damage to a lesser extent which occurred along the tops of the walls before the original pole gutters were replaced by modern hung gutters. The interior has seen virtually no alteration for the sake of its use as a church other than the addition of a modern pulpit on the dais. This is remarkable, in light of the fact that the temple has been used by four different denomination groups since it was sold by the original congregation's trustees in 1954. These later occupants have kept this rather modest-sized building (approximately 40 feet square in plan) viable through the addition sometime in the last 30 years of a basement Sunday School room, which is reached via a stair adjacent to the vestibule in the rear of the sanctuary (Photo 5). The original congregation's need for similar classroom space was satisfied by the use at the rear of the site of the congregation's first permanent home, a frame structure originally built in 1867 on a site three blocks to the east and moved here in 1889 for such adaptive reuse. This earlier building was apparently demolished sometime in the first half of the 20th century, when it was probably in need of repairs, but no longer needed by the then much diminished congregation. A modern prefabricated classroom building presently occupies the rear half of the site (Photo 3).

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1889

Builder/Architect

Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The former Ahavas Shalom Reform Temple is primarily significant as the single most important tangible reminder of the prominent role played by the Jewish community in the development of the city of Ligonier. The temple was created and nurtured by a unique set of conditions which allowed the Jewish community to flourish. Jews came to Ligonier as a part of the general wave of settlers which came to northern Indiana in the mid-19th century from Germany via Pennsylvania and Ohio; apparently, their similar nationality and a generally tolerant attitude on the part of the German Mennonite settlers in the immediate area led to the establishment of a dispersed local Jewish community in Noble and DeKalb Counties.

By 1856 Jews from the Ligonier area were noted as regularly going to worship at Auburn, seat of DeKalb County. In 1858, the Jews of Ligonier organized the Congregation Ahavas Shalom (Lovers of Peace), and began holding services in the homes of members who lived in Ligonier, most notably those of Jacob and Frederick Straus and Joseph Kaufman. In 1867 the congregation made its first permanent home in a frame structure which stood on a lot north of Cavin Park and was leased to the group for 21 years by Jacob Straus. This provision of a permanent location for services enhanced the growth of the congregation as a center of Judaism in northeastern Indiana; in 1888 Jacob Straus provided the impetus for the construction of a larger, more elaborate home for the Congregation at the present site.

By this time the Congregation included about 60 families, and accounted for the ownership of about half of the businesses in Ligonier. A look at the individuals who provided some of the donations for the new temple, however, illustrates more fully than these statistics both the prominence and enlightened concern of the members of this community. Jacob and Frederick Straus donated one of the temple windows in their family's name; they were the proprietors of the Straus Brothers Bank, which, in 1888, had erected a large commercial block in the downtown, as well as the Straus Brothers farm realty brokerage, which had offices in 13 Midwestern states. Jacob Straus organized the local school board and oversaw construction of the town's first public school. Frederick Straus, who was also a woolens merchant, had served as one of Ligonier's three Jewish mayors. Another window was given by the Mier family, whose members included Solomon Mier, also a onetime Mayor, as well as the proprietor of the Solomon Mier banking house and the Mier Carriage Company, which later manufactured automobiles in Ligonier. Saul Mier established both the city water works and sewage system. Activities of the Congregation included a women's auxiliary which provided assistance to both Jews and Gentiles, alike, in the community.

Later experience was to show, however, that the dedication of the new temple on September 6, 1889, could be construed as the apogee of the Congregation's vitality: by 1904, a rabbi came from South Bend to provide services only on Friday evenings; by the 1920's the Congregation had dwindled to about 24 families, and by the 1935 Ligonier Centennial,

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it was noted that for the preceding three years services had been held in the temple only on High Holy Days. In 1954, the building was sold to the Methodist Church of Ligonier. The success of the Congregation seems to have been its local undoing, since the later generations of its members moved to larger cities such as Ft. Wayne, South Bend, and Chicago to pursue professional or business careers. This change is signified by the removal of the temple's ner tomid, a light symbolic not only of Judaism, but of the life of the Congregation, to the Lakeside Congregation for Reform Judaism in highland Park, Illinois, a Chicago suburb.

The successive use of the temple building by Methodists (1954-1961), the First Christian Church (1961-1965), the Lutherans (1965-1974), and by the Trinity Assembly of God (1974 to present) not only illustrates the basic functional flexibility of the building's plan; it also serves to point up a basic architectural quality related not only to this particular instance, but to the architecture created to house American Judaism, in general. Partly because of their own lack of acquaintance with the details of Judaic ceremony, partly because of a varying amount of prohibition of representational art observed in varying degrees by the different sects of Judaism, American architects did not approach the design of buildings to house Judaism with any clear stylistic precedents on which to rely, as was usually the case for the various Christian denominations. Often architects solved this problem by using a plan arrangement familiar in other religious designs and giving the design one of two sets of stylistic clothing: either an adaptation of Islamic forms to connote the Near East (c.f. the B'nai Yehurun Synagogue, Eighth and Plum Streets, Cincinnati, Ohio, built 1866) or simply an adaptation of such architectural styles as were otherwise popular for contemporaneous Christian architecture.

This latter variant was the one used in Ligonier: the plan is a variant of the side-tower type first used in the 1830's by the English Ecclesiological Movement and stylistically associated with the Victorian (Ruskinian) Gothic. This heritage is also seen in the prominent role played by the gables as determinants of the overall form, which also has a stocky tower whose spire is given a quasi-broached outline to complete the stylistic formula. The use of a gabled base rather than a true broached spire provides exception to the Gothic vocabulary, and further differentiation is made by such Richardsonian Romanesque devices as the deep, closely spaced corbels beneath the base of the spire, the structural articulation and muted polychromy provided by the contrast between the smooth brick walls and the rock-faced stone stringcourse at the common springline of the arches, and the use of one type of stone masonry versus another to provide another sort of structural articulation, between the rock-faced stringcourse and the smooth voussoirs of the principal arches.

While the golden oak woodwork used on the interior is in keeping with the general nature of Richardsonian designs, one can only speculate whether the circular motifs used in the windows were at all developed further by the painted, stencilled decoration of the walls, to provide either more of the sort of Judiac iconography seen in the window glass designs, or simply more variations of the sort of running floral ornament seen in other Richardsonian examples of many types. Certainly, the Richardsonian Romanesque relied upon the use of both the round and the horseshoe arch for its decoration, and both devices derive from the style's historical sources in the Moorish and early Christian architecture of Spain, which were in the late 19th century also seen as expressions of the sort of Near Eastern influences also regarded at that time as appropriate imagery for American Judaism. Thus, the design for the Ahavas Shalom Reform Temple embodies both of the major design trends

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usually present in American Judiac religious architecture: use of an established plan type which is closed in stylistic dress which is, at the same time, a current fashion for the time of its construction, and a style which makes reference, indirectly, to the Near East. While this may be construed as simply a fortuitous accident of changing eclectic styles, rather than any insight on the part of its unknown architect (perhaps Chicagoan Cass Chapman, who designed the Straus Brothers Block), this does not at all diminish the building's unique architectural significance. Nor does it affect the fact that, as both the former home of Congregation Ahavas Shalom and as the present home of Trinity Assembly of God, this building embodies both the unique community and the era of toleration which created it, and the respect for that heritage which its state of preservation today signifies.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Ligonier, Indiana

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	6	6	1	7	8	6	0	4	5	9	0	7	5	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

All of Lot 52 in the Original Plat of the Town of Ligonier, Noble County, Indiana.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Craig Leonard, Historic Preservation Consultant to

organization Indiana Jewish Historical Society date February, 1983

street & number 215 East Berry Street telephone 219/422-3862

city or town Fort Wayne state Indiana 46802

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature James M. Robinson

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer date April 21, 1983

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Books

Schwartz, Lois Fields. The Jews of Ligonier: An American Experience,
Indiana Jewish Historical Society, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1978.

_____, Ligonier, Indiana, 1835-1935, Centennial Pageant Committee,
Ligonier, Indiana, 1935.

Periodicals

Goldenberg, Sherman. "Ligonier, Fading Memories of Its Jewish Heritage,"
Journal-Gazette, Fort Wayne, Indiana, May 15, 1977, P. 1E

_____, "Ligonier Historical Edition," The Interurban Journal, place
of publication not given, January 7, 1915, no pagination.

_____, "The Temple Dedicated," Ligonier Banner, Ligonier, Indiana,
September 12, 1889, no pagination.

Manuscripts

Wertheimer, Leon. "History of the Jews of Ligonier," transcript of an
interview conducted June 24, 1963, by Joseph Levine of the Indiana
Jewish Historical Society, Fort Wayne, Indiana. Transcript in the
historical collection of the Ligonier, Indiana, Public Library,
no pagination.

Ahavas Shalom Reform Temple
Ligonier, Indiana
UTM Reference: 16/617860/4590750

